



Maricopa County

News Release

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Horse Tests Positive for West Nile virus: Maricopa County urges residents to “Fight the Bite” on Memorial Day weekend!

Tests conducted on a horse in Maricopa County have confirmed the animal was infected with West Nile virus (WNV); the first equine case this year, as reported by local health officials. Vector Control staff with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department is currently in North Phoenix sampling mosquitoes in the area.

Although there haven't been any reported human cases, this confirmed case of WNV in an animal should remind everyone that as the mosquito season intensifies, so are the risks of contracting WNV. It is extremely important that all Maricopa County residents protect themselves against West Nile virus. “Personal protection is the first and best line of defense for people to avoid this potentially deadly disease,” said Fulton Brock, Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

During this Memorial Day weekend, Maricopa County residents will be participating in various outdoor events to honor the brave men and women who have died for our freedoms. Before heading outside this holiday weekend, the Maricopa County departments of Environmental Services and Public Health would like to remind you of the different things you should do to avoid being bitten by a mosquito. “Take precautions not to get bitten as mosquitoes won't be taking the day off,” said Brock.

If possible, wear light colored clothing with long sleeves and pants. Wherever you may be this weekend, bring your insect repellent along and please follow label instructions, especially for use on children. Share your insect repellent with those around you. If you have the opportunity to protect someone else, take it. Your consideration could save lives.

Take these precautions to prevent WNV infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires, bird baths and other containers where water may collect.
- Remove unnecessary clutter.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Make sure pools and decorative ponds are properly maintained and operational.
- If possible, avoid outdoor activity at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent when exposure to mosquitoes cannot be avoided.

So far this year, Maricopa County Department of Public Health has not received any laboratory-confirmation of human cases of West Nile Virus infection. Last year, Maricopa County had 64 confirmed West Nile Virus cases, and 3 deaths.

For more information on West Nile virus, as well as for WNV dead bird drop-off locations, to report green pools or file any mosquito related complaint, and for WNV materials or presentations for your group/organization, call (602) 506-0700 or visit www.maricopa.gov/wnv

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